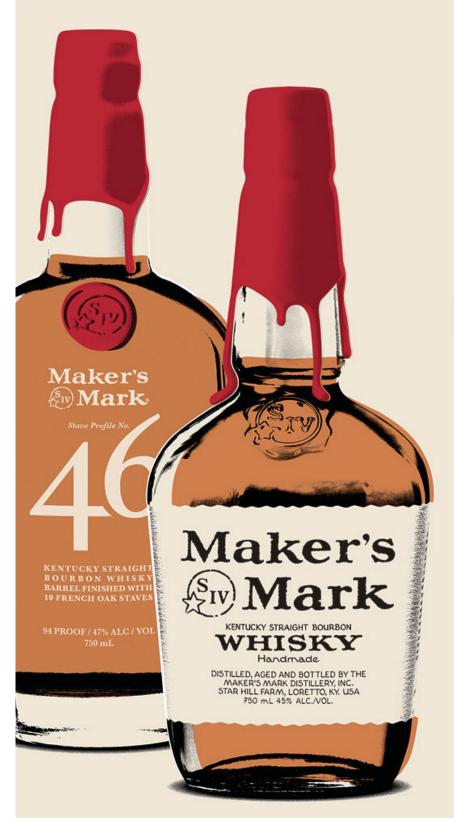
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for connection
in the year
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LOVE IN THE TIME OF CORONA

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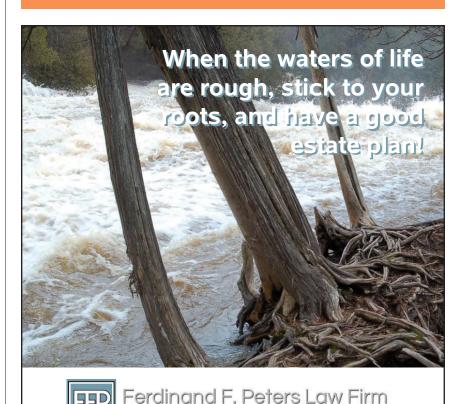
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Likely number of games in the 2020 MLB season, which... sounds like it's going to happen!

"The statue had a troubled past... perhaps he tripped and fell?"

—Reader Chris Kurle responds to "'Reparations' and 'rioters': Minnesota politicians are big mad about the Columbus statue" at citypages.com

FLOYD 911 CALL

IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE that this story could keep getting worse... and yet. On Monday, the city released audio of a call between a concerned 911 dispatcher watching George Floyd's arrest and a Minneapolis Police supervisor. "You can call me a snitch if you want to but we have the cameras up... all of them sat on this man, so I don't know if they needed you or not, but they haven't said anything to me yet," the unnamed dispatcher says. It's not clear if that supervisor responded, but as the Star Tribune noted, it sure doesn't look like one was present as Floyd's unresponsive body was loaded into an ambulance. Department spokesman John Elder declined to comment.

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COP OUT

Under siege, MPD sees a mini-wave of resignations

eports of widespread unrest within the Minneapolis Police Department have gone national, with major news outlets following a story from the Star Tribune about a flurry of resignations. Even setting aside nascent talk from the City Council of defunding-or disbanding, dismantling, abolishing; vague gerunds abound-some police officers felt city and department leadership had hung them out to dry during protests and riots in the name of George Floyd.

Department morale "sunk to new lows in recent weeks," the Strib reports, citing clashes with protesters, press scrutiny, a just-opened state investigation into the department (which, as a result, will have to put a pause on chokeholds), and the abandonment of the Third Police Precinct.

"They don't feel appreciated," retired MPD officer Mylan Masson told the paper. "Everybody hates the cops right now. I mean everybody."

That sounds like hyperbole. So does the notion that cops are turning in their badges en masse.

Here's the total damage: Seven officers left the department, with "several" mentioning a "lack of support from MPD leadership and City Hall" in their exit interviews. Seven more are in the process of resigning from the force, while "several others had to be talked out of leaving."

Assuming that second seven mentioned above complete their paperwork and resign, that's 14 total, or roughly 1.5 percent of a workforce of "about 850."

Police spokesperson John Elder says the wave of departures is not "so great that it's going to be problematic," and that the department will add a class of 29 graduating recruits (more than double the number who just quit) later this summer. Elder added that, as with other jobs, cops resign for "a myriad of reasons." For comparison's sake, 14 is the same number of cops who signed on to an open letter last week condemning

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ex-cop Derek Chauvin, charged with seconddegree murder in Floyd's death. Chauvin had "failed as a human and stripped George Floyd of his dignity and life," they wrote.

Claiming to "represent the voices of hundreds of other" officers, that group added:

"We acknowledge that Chief [Medaria] Arradondo needs each of us to dutifully follow him while he shows us the way. We stand ready to listen and embrace the calls for change, reform and rebuilding."

So... which is it? Are Minneapolis cops so disillusioned with a lack of support from public officials they're thinking of quitting? Or are "hundreds" so disillusioned by George Floyd's murder they're ready for a "rebuilding" of the entire department?

Add rebuilding to the list of gerunds. We'll get back to you with definitions as they become available. - MIKE MULLEN



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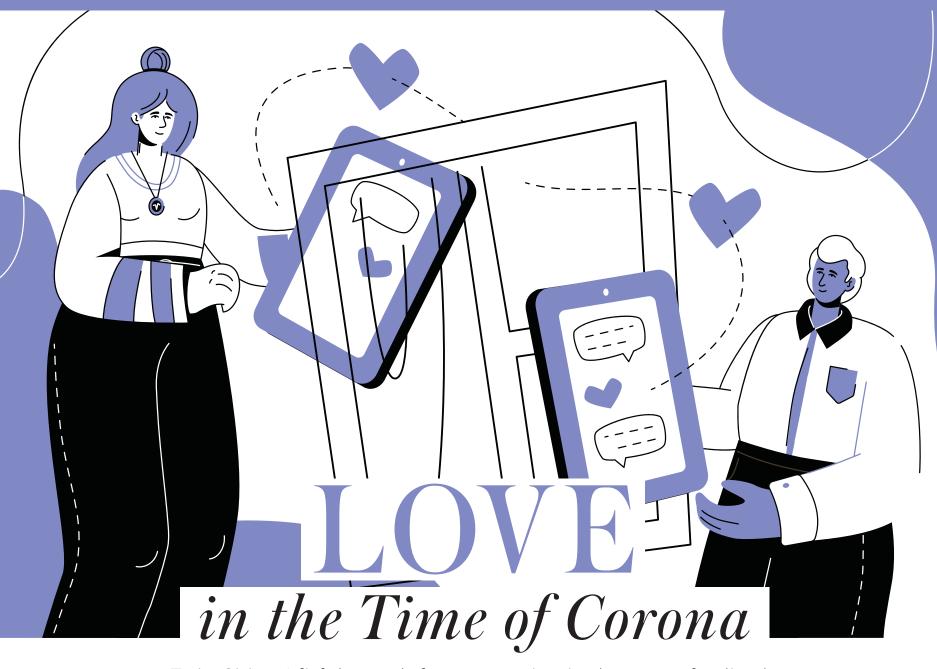
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Twin Citians' fitful search for connection in the year of solitude

SUSAN DU

I. SAM

ne night last fall Sam Riebs, a Hofstra University art major, went to a party with employees from the Long Island Trader Joe's, where he worked. As he struck up a conversation with a co-worker, things started falling into place. They were both shy, introspective people who enjoyed quiet movie dates watching period films like 1917 and Little Women, and tranquil nights in with dinner and Netflix.

During the semester, it was hard to find time for each other around school and work. "We were kind of just looking forward to when we'd have the time to let things develop further," Riebs says.

But with spring break on the horizon, the pall of coronavirus descended on New York, and its governor declared a state

of emergency. Classes were canceled. Riebs returned to his parents' house in Maple Grove, with no telling when he'll return to the East Coast.

At home Riebs played

Animal Crossing with his little sister. In that world, he's a goggle-eyed blond boy with a bubble head, an infinite wardrobe, and an island where he grew fruit to pay down his debt to a local real estate developer, who is also a raccoon. Everything

was cute, manicured, and more or less

within his control. Even the game's subtle financial exploitation imbued its adorable universe with nostalgia for normal times.

Riebs killed countless hours playing exactly what he was after in the dismal and reclusive period of quarantine. A thousand

miles away, the man he'd just started seeing in New York was going through similar things. Distance and depression stifled their budding relationship, and they didn't

talk for a few weeks.

So they met again in Animal Crossing, meandering through each other's islands while they talked on the phone. The boyfriend bought Riebs a virtual teddy bear. Riebs toured the in-game museum where the other man displayed the butterflies and

fish he'd caught. They tagged each other's island message boards with smiley faces.

"If he was coming over to my island, I'd clean everything up and change my character to look nicer. Instead of just wearing like a hat and jeans, I'd put on some nicer pants and a jacket," Riebs says. "The few times we've done that, it's just been nice to feel like I'm getting ready for a date, even though it's in Animal Crossing."

He and his new friend had known each other such a short time, it's impossible to say where things would've gone if they'd had the summer together. As it was, neither wanted to compel a long-distance relationship into being. In this strange coronavirus summer, Riebs isn't the only one stumbling upon intimacy in peculiar places.









II. AMY

Amy Min Williams, a data analyst who lives in Minneapolis, entered 2020 with no intention of getting involved in anything serious or sentimental. She married at a fledgling 24, divorced by 30, got engaged to someone else after that, then called off the wedding last year. Now in her late thirties, she's studying part-time toward her master's degree. Dating was a casual diversion.

In December Williams matched with a man in his early forties on Bumble. They went on one date, and then she skipped town on a three-week sojourn to Southeast Asia. Texting back and forth, they discovered they listened to the same music, had friends in common, lived within walking distance of each other, and were both childless by choice.

When she got back, they went on date no. 2. Then it was his turn to go abroad for six weeks, after which she had a business trip. Their budding courtship was trapped in an Austenian slow burn-pure and epistolary. "It was so strange knowing someone so well, but not having anything physical happen," Williams says.

When their schedules finally aligned, they booked a trip to Miami for the middle of March. Before long, social distancing became the law of the land, and the springbreakers overcrowding Florida's beaches were being internationally mocked. They canceled their flight.

After some discussion, they chose to be exclusive so they could keep seeing each other during the pandemic. Soon they were shacking up together at his house, cooking meals, going for runs, and co-parenting Williams's dog, who has idiopathic epilepsy.

"I don't know if it's because we are

both older or if we are just a better fit than with past partners, but it is really working out," Williams says. If it hadn't been for COVID, she doubts they would have ended up together.

"I have fears that we're moving way too fast, but it's a strange situation we find ourselves in."

III. KENYON

Macalester graduate Kenyon DeVault concluded long before COVID that he wanted to settle down with a partner, but it took a pandemic for him to finally try matchmaking.

After college, DeVault moved to San Francisco, where he does fundraising for a youth mentorship program. Chatty by nature and sociable by profession, he's just about had it with the number of men he meets on dates who can't hold up their end of the conversation. In the teeming Castro district, where he lives, there are almost too many fish in the sea to date deeply. He frequents Tinder and meets plenty of people organically in real life, but ever since his last longterm relationship ended five years ago, he's been unlucky in finding a new one. Either he doesn't feel challenged, or men merely string him along before moving on. After a decade living out West, he's sworn off new transplants and their short attention spans.

A couple years ago, DeVault looked into a luxury dating service called Tawkify, which promotes itself as a "personal concierge to your dating life" for "mature singles." It employs real-life matchmakers to dissect clients' dating history and curate matches. Access to its "exclusive" clientele costs thousands of dollars in yearly membership dues.



ETTV

DeVault did not have the budget for it at the time, but recently Tawkify offered a promotion to screen people for free as potential matches for its paying members.

"I'm tired. I've tried a lot," DeVault told himself. "It's not like I'm not able to meet people and make connections. That's clearly not my issue. But it's just not clicking. So I'm like, 'Why not make someone else do the labor?""

Normally, Tawkify would choose the restaurant of a blind date's first encounter. In these virtual times, it instructed DeVault to set up a Facetime call, prepare his favorite cocktail or bar snack, and "dress like you're going to a hot, hip restaurant."

When he met his match, technological difficulties ensued. Facetime wouldn't work on his laptop, so he had to switch to his phone, which had to be charged and propped at a flattering angle. DeVault lives with a roommate, so his side of the date played out in his bedroom.

"The first moments were a little strange because we're in each other's home suddenly," he says. "I'm not opposed to sleeping with someone on the first date, but not normally when I first meet them."

It was weird. But nice. DeVault poured himself some wine. His match fixed himself a lemon drop, a sugary vodka drink. They were comfortable enough to dive straight into dialogue, and ended up talking for two hours about missing their families and their gay-bar friends, the uniqueness of that social scene. Afterward, they filled out surveys about each other—DeVault made some polite suggestions for his date's camera setup—and started texting.

The match lives in Sacramento, an hour and a half north. In the pre-COVID world, it may not have made sense to sink that kind of effort into someone so far away. But now all DeVault has is time for video calls.

He and his roommate made a pact allowing each a designated hook-up during quarantine, which amps the stakes of making the right choice. and a self-described "proud pervert with a zesty sex life." He requested anonymity to avoid injecting his non-monogamous social network with unnecessary drama.

G says the people in his orbit seem hornier than ever. They tend to be Twin Cities progressives concerned with public health, struggling to reconcile a mounting craving for human contact. Hook-up apps

"We should all strive to be skilled masturbators by the end of this."

"At first it felt like I was being shunted back to high school where it's like, 'I'm never going to get laid,'" he says. "Within the first week I created a playlist of songs I listened to in middle school and high school because that's where my mind was. I'm feeling more at ease around it, but it was odd."

IV. G

"Ithink it's funny you're finding such chaste trends emerging in quarantine," wrote a friend, G, in an email. He's a handsome man in his thirties, sociable, a bit cocksure,

are on fire. G says he's received a sudden flurry of suggestive texts from attractive women, the kind who never had to lift a finger to get a date, suddenly playing the role of pursuer.

"My sense was that people were boning as much as ever, if not more—just keeping it real secret and not posting about it on social media," he says.

Ironically, G isn't feeling himself at all. Since the governor's stay-at-home order began, he hasn't hit the gym or gotten a haircut. After lots of drinking at home, ordering pizza for too many meals, and justifying it all with a cynical refrain of,

"Who cares, fuck it," he's never felt less virile with his shirt off.

Suddenly G realized that the gym was the lynchpin for discipline in all areas of his life, the thing that forced him to get out of bed every morning and don a fresh change of clothes. Without it, he went on a major depressive skid.

Eventually he decided enough was enough. His primary partner, an artist he's been with for years, gave him a clipper fade. Then G got a flat bench with adjustable dumbbells off Craigslist. These days he drags the set over to the abandoned schoolyard behind his house, where he pumps iron on the lawn, a scene straight out of Muscle Beach.

"I do think the current time requires just a hefty degree of acceptance, of lowered expectations especially," he says. "Accept that you will be 40 percent as productive, as attractive, as wealthy, as fun. As happy."

V. W

W. a 27-year-old fashion designer from St. Paul, recalls the off-the-books warehouse raves she attended in north Minneapolis during the first weekend in March as some of the best nights out she'd ever had. Because the prognosis for partying in 2020 was so grim, people were dancing like it was the end of the world.

She'd started off the year learning to feel comfortable as a queer woman, exploring polyamory and BDSM. A few dates with a woman developed into a sexy and soulful friendship. She felt like she'd just entered a period of metamorphosis when COVID made landfall.

W doesn't care much for relationships, preferring solitude. She did buy a new pandemic vibrator, but found she takes more pleasure in dressing up, so she's spending quarantine collecting fetish fashion, staging kinky photo shoots, and sending pinups to friends who appreciate them.

"I've been really coming to terms with myself, my sexuality, and I've been feeling a lot more confident, able to love myself more," she says. "Oh, and my biggest realization is that I love group sex."

She'd only just learned that in the months leading up to the pandemic. Once dinner parties became taboo, group sex turned into even more of a forbidden fruit.

She can't stop thinking about it—when people are going to feel comfortable again, how to establish consent and health histories, making that sexy.

Meanwhile, W has been using COVID to refamiliarize herself with the things she loves: sewing and knitting, collecting found oddities from the side of the road, reading books, and generally immersing herself in a fantastical internal life of crafting things. She also started anti-anxiety medication and sought therapy.

"It's an important time for a lot of people to just accept what's going on and take the

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time to work through anything we need to work through," she says. "I've been really balanced, and I've accepted my reality."

There's no normal when it comes to sex and COVID, says sex therapist Dr. Eric Sprankle, an associate professor at Minnesota State University. The Kinsey Institute of human sexuality quickly surveyed thousands of couples across the country and found libidos scattered all across the board.

"Early predictions were people at home would have nothing else to do, so there will be a baby boom. And then we thought about that more and were like, 'Eh, will people really stand each other for that much time?' So maybe we'll see a divorce boom. It's a lot of unknowns."

As a sex psychologist, Sprankle believes sexual health and satisfaction are essential to whole health. But without being a medical expert, he can't condone leaving the house and risking it all for a lay.

"But the qualifier is sort of how are we defining sexual health and sexual satisfaction. They shouldn't be dependent on sexual contact with others," he says.

New York City's health department, for example, published COVID sex guidance with such delightful advice as, "We know that other coronaviruses are not easily spread through semen or vaginal fluid," but "you are your safest sex partner." (Remember to wash your hands for 20 seconds before and after.)

"We need to explore how texting and video chats can meet our sexual needs," Sprankle says. "And we can certainly touch ourselves. In fact, we should all strive to be skilled masturbators by the end of this."

VI. LUCAS

Lucas Anderson, who's been traveling for his job as an events producer of music festivals and movie premieres for the better part of the last seven years, recently moved back to Minnesota to get his bearings in between projects.

In early March, the day President Donald Trump canceled international arrivals, Anderson touched down in Minneapolis after working a month in Berlin. His flight was like a ghost plane. The few passengers wore masks.

A nomad and no stranger to meeting new people over the internet, Anderson's not looking for anything in particular. Feeling drained from Tinder-ing on the road, he says he's content to wait for love to pop him in the face one day. "'I'm a little focused on my career right now,' I think that's what people say?"

When COVID canceled all the work he'd lined up for 2020, Anderson thought he'd make the most of it. But big plans for guilty pleasures like watching movies, getting stoned, and surfing dating profiles gave way to a sedentary dread with no end in sight.

It was easy to talk to strangers online at first because everyone had COVID in common. But even the pandemic could carry a dialogue only so far. "It's so hard to continue texting someone knowing vou're not actually going to meet them in person for what could be six months

There was one woman who asked him on a virtual date. They'd followed each other on Instagram for six months, commenting on each other's photos. All he really knew was her name and her penchant for dogs.

One day they hopped on Houseparty and talked for three and a half hours straight about losing their jobs, the state of politics, places they'd gone, music they liked. A couple of Anderson's friends ducked into their chat to say hi-almost as if they'd gone out to a bar and run into people he knew. They played Chips and Guac, a game resembling Apples to Apples.

Absent the expectation of any physical touch, he found the minutiae of etiquette and innuendo that would normally flood his thoughts on dates had vanished.

"All we could do was just talk and tell each other about what was going on in our lives," Anderson says. "It felt like I was actually able to get to know somebody without there being that thing in the back of my mind going, 'What's going to happen after we pay for the drinks? Am I supposed to walk her home? Is she going to think I'm weird and not want any piece of this?""

A quick video call could be a good way to screen out bad chemistry in the postquarantine world, he says. But then again, it's the imperfect encounter, the awkward fumbling in uncertain situations, that makes dating less safe but more thrilling.

Ultimately, Anderson decided his time was best spent developing himself, so that when social distancing officially ends, he'll be better prepared to understand the type of person he's looking for.

"I've realized throughout the years that I have been unconsciously looking for flaws in others since I can remember, whether that be people I've dated, the friends I have, my family, co-workers," he says. "I was spending all this time judging, I wasn't taking enough time to evaluate myself and things I needed to work on."

In lieu of dating, he began to self-reflect by journaling, meditating, keeping a list of things to be grateful for, and going on long, solitary walks in the afternoon. He's taking online courses in marketing, film, events production, and tour managing to hone his professional skills.

At the beginning of July, he plans to sell most of his possessions, pack a bag, and move to Germany to embark on the next chapter of his life.

"What I'm hoping to do through this time is to dig deeper into finding out who I really am, where I want to be, and where my true happiness lies."

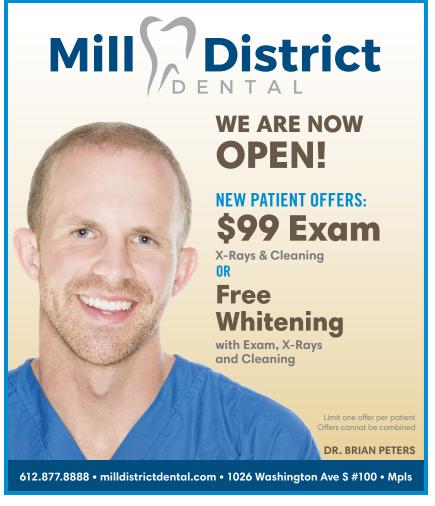


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BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL, GETT

HAVE A DRINK ABOUT IT

"Ultra-rural" Revelation Ale Works prepares to pour pints of "Black is Beautiful" stout

BY SARAH BRUMBLE

ry, if possible, to recall earlier this year, all the way back in April. (We know it's hard!) The craft beer industry had united on a worldwide scale to support its own folk, from within, by brewing All Together IPA. Proceeds from sales of the beer were donated to local organizations founded to support out-of-work service industry folk, including employees laid off from taprooms and breweries.

At the time, we wrote about the astonishing power of a single beer to "[build] a support system for the rattled, while making it possible to know exactly what someone else very far away is clutching, tasting, and experiencing."

Little did we know that the All Together

project as a whole would lay the groundwork for beer-as-a-cause, or that its next version would challenge the industry to dig deeper, and perhaps look beyond itself.

Then, about two weeks ago, the "Black is Beautiful" initiative—created by Marcus Baskerville, founder and head brewer of San Antonio's Weathered Souls Brewing Co.—formed in direct response to the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis Police.

Baskerville, who is Black, explains that he "has personally dealt with the abuse of power by the police, [and] this recent turmoil the country is facing has hit home for me." He and his colleagues took the tools at their disposal (read: beer) and mobilized a coordinated response of their own.

"We took a stout recipe and decided to

call on our peers in the brewing industry to collaborate in unison for equality and inclusion amongst people of color," Baskerville writes on the Black is Beautiful site, which houses the beer's open-source recipe, promo materials, an area that tracks and registers brewers' participation, and labels for distributing the final product (in partnership with KD Designs and Creative Mango).

In exchange for participating, he asks brewers to:

- Donate 100% of the beer's proceeds to local foundations that support police brutality reform and legal defenses for those who have been wronged
- Find a local entity of their choice to donate to, which supports equality and inclusion
- Commit to the long-term work of equality... full stop.

As of print time, 22 Minnesota breweries (and counting) have pledged to brew and sell Black is Beautiful, an imperial stout that clocks in at 10% ABV. Participants range from local Twin Cities heavyweights like

Pryes and Blackstack to Duluth's Ursa Minor, and hinterland big boys like Lupulin and Forager.

Northeast Minneapolis's Able Seedhouse + Brewery announced they're co-brewing their stout with start-up Arbeiter Brewing, which has been working toward opening just half a block from the (now-torched) Third Precinct station. Per their social media posts, it will be "a while" before the batch is ready for purchase, but when it comes out, Able says proceeds will go to Reclaim the Block, Urban League Twin Cities, and We Love Lake Street.

Meanwhile, about as far away in Minnesota as one can get from the Third Precinct, Revelation Ale Works' beer should be ready for distribution from Alexandria to Grand Rapids and Fargo-Moorehead within two weeks or so. Google Maps says a road trip to Revelation's charming taproom, located in a historic remodeled service station in downtown Hallock, Minnesota (population 981) takes a hair under six hours... each way.

"It's just a rural part of the state. I mean, the percentage of white people in our county is a lot," head brewer Ryan Evenson told City Pages, and also mentioned that Kittson County as a whole has had only one (single) confirmed COVID-19 infection.

Evenson underlined that for as far away and bubble-like as Revelation may seem, they're participating in the Black is Beautiful collaborative brew because "Minneapolis is part of our community." Giving big, experimental beers a home in rural Minnesota is fundamental to Revelation's mission, so rather than letting local demographics complicate their involvement in Black is Beautiful, Evenson is leaning into it. "I'm excited for the first conversation we have in the taproom. Y'know, pour a pint and, like, somebody asks, 'Oh what does this mean?' We can have that conversation," he says.

The trickiest part for Revelation's team came in finding where they'd send proceeds from the stout's sales. Ultimately they settled on the Brewing Change Collaborative, whose m.o. is one of fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion in the brewing industry. "That's something that's—in Minnesota, there aren't that many... minority-owned breweries," explained Evenson of their choice. "I mean, we would donate the money even more locally, but there's nothing really local that fits in," he added, with a laugh.

"We're doing it up here just mostly to create awareness and it's... it's fun for us to be able to address some of the issues we are dealing with in a different way."

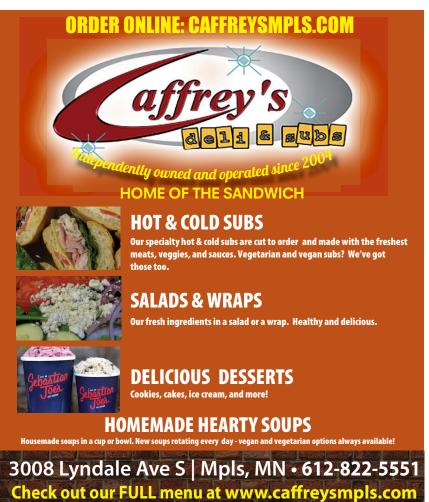
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REPARATIONS AND RIOTERS

Politicians are mad about the Columbus statue

BY HANNAH JONES

bronze sculpture of Christopher Columbus—about 10 feet tall, and perched atop a red granite base of about the same height—had been sitting outside the Minnesota State Capitol building in St. Paul since 1931.

It was conceived a few years earlier, in 1927, during a meeting of the Italian Progressive Club of Duluth. At the time, Italian immigrants were widely disparaged and discriminated against, including in Minnesota's Iron Range. Getting a monument, and a day, dedicated to this famous Italian seemed like a good way to incorporate the Italian identity into

the American identity.

At the time, the American identity had a somewhat narrower, more northern European bandwidth. Being accepted as "American" was also about being accepted as white. That was increasingly expanding to include immigrants like Italians and people from eastern Europe. It didn't include, however, the people who were here before Columbus—and consequently suffered from the colonialism, genocide, and crimes against humanity he participated in elsewhere, and that followed here.

Last Wednesday, a group of protesters, some of them Dakota and Ojibwe, pulled the 10-foot Columbus off his pedestal with a rope and sent him clattering to the ground. State Patrol troopers looked on from a distance and did not interfere. The victory was celebrated with traditional song and dance. Then the remains were carted away.

Some onlookers were shocked by how quick it was. Some were shocked we even had a statue of Columbus at the Capitol at all. Like, shouldn't we have switched that guy out for Prince at some point?

Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan, herself a member of the White Earth band of Ojibwe, released a statement admitting she couldn't claim to be sad.

"I'm not," she said. "It was a constant

reminder that our systems were not built by or for Native people or people of color, but in many cases, to exclude, erase, and eliminate us."

Other politicians expressed their disappointment and disdain via Twitter for the apparent lawlessness on display. None quite defended Columbus as a historical figure, or the need for his statue to grace the Capitol grounds. Instead they worried about "public property."

Rep. Steve Drazkowski (R-Mazeppa), a man who once tried to ensure state actions and documents could only be presented in English, called out Flanagan's position specifically, saying it was "sick."

Sen. Dave Tomassoni (D-Chisholm) went as far as to suggest "reparations" be paid. (If we're keeping score, Columbus is probably so far in the hole he won't be able to discover his hand in front of his face.)

To those concerned that the elimination of the statue would eliminate Columbus's place in history, State Auditor Julie Blaha suggested there were probably more effective methods of seeking out that information than staring at a man made of bronze ("Anyone who thinks statues are a good way to teach history has never chaperoned a school field trip that included statues."). Rep. Jim Nash (R-Waconia) didn't take kindly to that. ("Whether or not someone agrees with what the statue represents, wanton destruction of that item isn't something we want our students to learn is it?")

House Minority Leader Kurt Daudt called the people who'd pulled down Columbus "rioters," who were enabled by Gov. Tim Walz, and wondered how it was the press knew this was coming.

(It had been posted to Facebook as a public event.)

It wouldn't be a complete roundup without a word from Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka (R-East Gull Lake), who believes an event in which nobody except a 10-foot bronze colonizer was hurt sets a "dangerous precedent."

But we'll leave you with by far and away the broadest stroke being used to paint this incident, which comes not from Minnesota but from Republican Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, who referred to the protestors as, and we quote: "American Taliban."



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BY HOOK OR BY CROOK

Hook and Ladder still standing and ready to begin streaming series



COURTESY OF THE HOOK AND LADDE

BY KEITH HARRIS

he Hook and Ladder Theater & Lounge was all set to begin broadcasting an ambitious series of highdefinition, multi-camera concert livestreams on June 5. If you know where the Hook and Ladder is, you'll understand why things didn't go quite as planned.

Situated at the corner of Lake and Minnehaha, in the shadow of the Third Police Precinct, the hardy nonprofit music venue somehow emerged from the recent unrest structurally intact, despite suffering fairly extensive water and smoke damage. While the middle section that separates the Hook's two performance spaces was broken into, no one could enter the theaters themselves.

"The fireproof steel doors—they couldn't get those open," says Jesse Brodd, the Hook's talent buyer and marketing director. "The outside glass-block window was thick enough to keep people out as well. Our smart water-irrigation system went off and proceeded to run all night long—that was a pretty good deterrent."

Now, after a surprisingly brief delay, the Hook is set to resume the Hook-Stream series this weekend, with a slate of streaming concerts scheduled through August 1. Davina & the Vagabonds kick things off this Saturday, June 20, with Grayson DeWolfe performing on Sunday. Future performers include Charlie Parr, GB Leighton, and Sarah Morris.

The Hook has had to adapt to circumstances. While the sprinklers may have prevented further fire-related mayhem, they also flooded the main theater. So for now at least, performances will take place in the more intimate Mission Room.

"We've basically turned these into fundraisers—for artists, for the Hook and Ladder, and for the community," says Brodd, who notes that 10 percent of all proceeds are earmarked for nonprofits, with some performers giving away more. Davina & the Vagabonds, for instance, will donate all of what they bring in to the Association for Black Economic Power.

Those tickets will cost \$15, but for many of the other shows they're just suggesting a donation. "We want to balance this out: to give the audience something for free, but also to respect the value of the musicians' work," Brodd says.

While the governor's slight easing of COVID-19 restrictions allows live music performances to start up again with reduced audiences, electrical damage makes that currently untenable for the Hook. "Right now we couldn't have a live studio audience even if we wanted to," Brodd says. "Long-term, once we can get the facility working and a safety plan in place, we could open up the garage door and some people could be seated outside."

The series may evolve as the summer proceeds. "We want to be there for the community and for the artists—that's our mission," Brodd says. "We'll take it one HookStream at a time."

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

>> By Rob Brezsny

ARIES (March 21-April 19): My Aries friend Lavinia told me, "The fight Im enjoying most lately is my fight to resist the compulsion to fight." I invite you to consider adopting that attitude for the foreseeable future. Now and then, you Rams do seem to thrive on conflict, or at least use it to achieve worthy deeds—but the coming weeks will not be one of those times. I think you're due for a phase of sweet harmony. The more you cultivate unity and peace and consensus, the healthier you'll be. Do you dare act like a truce-maker, an agreement-broker, and a connoisseur of rapport?

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): "The answers you get depend upon the questions you ask," wrote physicist and philosopher Thomas Kuhn. That's always true, of course, but it's especially true for you right now. I recommend that you devote substantial amounts of your earthy intelligence to the task of formulating the three most important questions for you to hold at the forefront of your awareness during the rest of 2020. If you do, I suspect you will ultimately receive answers that are useful, interesting, and transformative.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): "A finished person is a boring person," writes author Anna Quindlan. I agreel Luckly, you are quite unfinished, and thus not at all boring-especially these days. More than ever before, you seem willing to treat yourself as an art project that's worthy of your creative ingenuity—as a work-in-progress that's open to new influences and fresh teachings. That's why I say your unfinishedness is a sign of good health and vitality. It's delightful and inspiring. You're willing to acknowledge that you've got a lot to bearn and more to grow. In fact, you celebrate that fact; you exult in it, you regard it as a key part of your ever-evolving identity.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): "To hell with pleasure that's haunted by fear," wrote Cancerian author Jean de La Fontaine. I'll make that one of my prayers for you in the coming weeks. It's a realistic goal you can achieve and install as a permanent improvement in your life. While you're at it, work on the following prayers, as well: 1. To hell with bliss that's haunted by guilt. 2. To hell with by that's haunted by guilt. 2. To hell with breakthroughs that are haunted by debts to the past. 4. To hell with uplifts that are haunted by other people's nessimism.

▶ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Experiment #1: As you take a walk in nature, sing your five favorite songs from beginning to end, allowing yourself to fully feel all the emotions those tunes arouse in you. Experiment #2: Before you go to sleep on each of the next eleven nights, ask your dreams to bring you stories like those told by the legendary Schehlerazade, whose tales were so beautiful and engaging that they healed and improved the lives of all those who heard them. Experiment #3: Gaze into the mirror and make three promises about the gratifying future you will create for yourself during the next 12 months.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Vincent van Gogh's painting *The Starry Night* is one of the world's most treasured paintings. It has had a prominent place in New York's Museum of Modern Art since 1941. If it ever came up for sale it would probably fetch over \$100 million. But soon after he created this great masterpiece, van Gogh himself called it a "failure." He fait the stars hed made were too big and abstract. I wonder if you're engaging in a comparable underestimation of your own. Are there elements of your life that are actually pretty good, but you're not giving them the credit and appreciation they deserve? Now's a good time to reconsider and re-evaluate.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Now is a favorable time to make adjustments in how you allocate your attention—to re-evaluate what you choose to focus on. Why? Because some people, issues, situations, and experiences may not be worthy of your intense care and involvement, and you will benefit substantially from redirecting your fine intelligence in more rewarding directions. To empower your efforts, study these inspirational quotes: "Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity." —philosopher Simone Weil. "Attention is the natural prayer of the soul." —philosopher Nicolas Malehranche.

Scorpio poet Marianne Moore's poem "O To Bao a Dragon," begins with the fantasy, "If, like Solomon, could have my wish ... "What comes next? Does Moore declare her desire to be the best poet ever? To be friends with smart, interesting, creative people? To be admired and gossiped about for wearing a tricorn hat and black cape as she walked around Greenwich Village near her home? Nope. None of the above. Her wish: "O to be a dragon, a symbol of the power of Heaven-of silk-worn size or immense: at times invisible. Felicitous phenomenon!" In accordance with astrological omens, I invite you to be inspired by Moore in the coming weeks. Make extravagant wishes for lavish and amusing powers, blessings, and fantastic possibilities.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): "Poems, like dreams, are a sort of royal road to the unconscious," writes author Erica Jong. "They tell you what your secret self cannot express." I invite you to expand that formula so it's exactly suitable for you in the coming weeks. My sense is that you are being called to travel the royal road to your unconscious mind so as to discover what your secret self has been unable or unwilling to express. Poems and dreams might do the trick for you, but so might other activities. For example: sexual encounters between you and a person you respect and love; or an intense night of listening to music that cracks open the portal to the royal road. Any others? What will work best for you?

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): "We must combine the toughness of the serpent and the softness of the dove, a tough mind and a tender heart." Capricorn hero Martin Luther King, Jr. said that, and now I'm conveying it to you. In my astrological opinion, his formula is a strategy that will lead you to success in the coming weeks. It'll empower you to remain fully open and receptive to the fresh opportunities flowing your way, while at the same time you'll remain properly skeptical about certain filmflams and delusions that may superficially resemble those fresh opportunities.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): "If it makes you nervous—you're doing it right," says the daring musician and actor Donald Glover. Personally, I don't think that's true in all situations. I've found that on some occasions, my nervousness stems from not being fully authentic or being less than completely honest. But I do think Glover's formula fully applies to your efforts in the coming weeks, Aquarius. I hope you will try new things that will be important to your future, and/or work to master crucial skills you have not yet mastered. And if you're nervous as you carry out those heroic feats, I believe it means you're doing them right.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Piscean author Patricia Hampl understands a lot about the epic tasks of trying to know oneself and be oneself. She has written two memoirs, and some of her other writing draws from her personal experiences, as well. And yet she confesses, "Maybe being oneself is always an acquired taste." She suggest that it's often easier to be someone you're not; to adopt the ways of other people as your own; to limitate what you admire rather than doing the hard work of finding out the truth about yourself. That's the bad news, Pisces. The good news is that this year has been and will continue to be a very favorable time to ripen into the acquired taste of being yourself. Take advantage of this ripening opportunity in the coming weeks!

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HOOKED ON PHONICS

BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

Across

- 1 State with the world's largest wooden nickel
- 5 Keel over
- 10 Key with two sharps: Abbr.
- 14 British buck
- 15 Shiny
- 16 Actress Chaplin
- 17 Ctrl-Z command
- 18 Old-timey ski lift for mountain lions?
- 20 Cubes in a cooler
- 21 France's bullet train
- 22 Sainte-___, Quebec City
- 23 Recent law school grad who's determined?
- 28 Maps feature, for short
- 31 NYSE listings
- 32 Steps to the barre
- 33 Like inclement weather
- 34 One-up
- 37 "Couldn't have said it better myself"
- 39 Alex and ___ (jewelry brand)
- Demolishes some computer graphics?
- 44 Cricket need
- 45 Maker of Healthy Kitten food
- 46 Fills up the tank
- 47 "You gotta be kidding me"
- 48 With 8-Down, Christmastime treat
- 49 Bummed
- 50 No-win situation?
- 51 First lesson in canoeing school?
- 57 "She's the one"
- 59 All-purpose truck

- 60 It's hard to define (sorry this clue's so vague)
- 61 A pair of preppie stores in the flesh?
- 65 University founder Cornell
- 66 Silk Road explorer
- 67 Real dickhead 68 Pointer's word
- 69 "Hello ___" (cellphone ad catchphrase)
- 70 Tech-based Condé Nast title
- 71 Word said by those getting their Masters?

Down

- 1 "The hell with this job"
- 2 Dispensary amount
- 3 Add an additional lane
- 4 Big whoop at the Globe
- 5 "Actually ..."
- 6 Whiskey ___ (Hollywood nightclub)
- 7 <3
- 8 See 48-Across
- BOAC competitor, once
 Where you might get your kicks
- 11 Skip Spence's psychedelic band from the '60s
- 12 Actress ___ de Armas
- 13 Hit hard
- 19 Backwoods mail rtes.
- 24 Band with a bolt of lightning in its logo
- 25 Kitchen help
- 26 Erupts
- 27 Rolling Stone founder Wenner
- 29 Guests on "Wait

Wait... Don't Tell Me!" Big drinks

Fel served in maki

- 34 "Yes, however ..."
- 36 All-out

35

- 37 "Knowledge equals power," e.g.
- 38 Delivery person?
- 41 "Not this shit again"
- 42 Way off in the distance
- 43 Throwing skill
- 48 French 101, day 1 lesson
- 49 Blizzasted
- 52 Case worker?
- 53 Carved grave marker
- 54 Humming amplifier55 What a [sic] follows
- 55 WHAT A [SIC] TOHOV
- 56 Tent holder
- 58 Cooking acronym coined by Rachael Ray
- 61 Time to be back from lunch, maybe
- 62 Place where everyone goes in London
- 63 Uppercut's target 64 X. in old Athens
- 64 X, In old Athens
- 5 Legendary imp

Last Week's Answer

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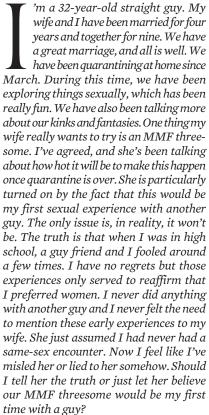


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Oral Reports

Should I tell my wife I've messed around with guys?



NERVOUSLY OMITTED HOMOSEXUAL OCCURRENCES, MOSTLY ORAL

If your wife reads my column, NOHOMO, then you've just told her the truth and the advice that follows is moot. So here's hoping she doesn't read my column: You don't have to tell your wife about the handful/ mouthful of times you messed around with another guy in high school. If you're like most straight guys with one or two cocks in your past, NOHOMO, I'm guessing you didn't tell the wife because you didn't want her to feel insecure or spend all her free time corresponding with advice columnists about whether her husband is secretly gay.

In fairness to the wife, NOHOMO, not every woman whose straight-identified male partner admits to a little same-sex messing around worries her boyfriend or husband is going to leave her for a dude or all the dudes. But this worry is common enough to be something of cliché. A straight guy doesn't even have to admit to having sucked one dick one time for his wife or girlfriend to worry he's secretly gay; I get at



Dan Savage

least one letter every day from a woman who's worried her husband is gay because he likes to have his nipples played with or his butt touched or because he has feelings. So while it's not ideal that straight or mostly straight guys don't feel they can be honest with their wives about their long ago and far away same-sex experimentation, NOHOMO, it's understandable that many straight guys err on the side of keeping that shit to themselves.

But your question isn't, "Why didn't I tell her then?" but rather, "Should I tell her now?" And I don't think you have to. She wasn't harmed by this omission—you didn't deprive her of information she was entitled to-and disclosing now would only serve to deprive her of something, i.e. the excitement she feels about being there to witness what she thinks is your first same-sex encounter.

My wife questions my use of the word "gay" as being potentially offensive and I'd like to get your take. I'm male and my male friends like to flirt and joke about performing sex acts on each other. We've never actually carried through with it but I consider myself on the "spectrum" and might be open to gay sex. My male friends and I say we're being or acting gay (though we're all practicing heterosexuals) and this is where my wife takes issue. For example, I might say, "We're so gay!", in our conversations, but the word is used in a positive way. My wife makes the point that the word has a history of being used negatively, so may be considered offensive, and should only be used casually by people who are more legit gay. Should I stop using the word gay this way?

GAY POSER

Jesus, just suck off one of your male friends already-just get it over with-and then you have my permission to keep using "gay" as compliment, GP.

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Food Packing Second Harvest Heartland seeks volunteers for Second Harvest Heartland seeks volunteers for packing food boxes. Sort, repackage and label items such as fresh produce, canned or boxed goods, and dry goods like rice into consumer-size packages. Once sorted, Second Harvest Heartland distributes these items to agency partners that serve our hungry neighbors. Brooklyn Park or Maplewood locations. https://www.2harvest.org/

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